

## A DIALECTAL READING OF THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The translation of dialect is one of the most difficult and yet interesting challenges facing literary translators. Although theoretical contributions about dialect translation develop mainly from 1960, this article proposes a historical reading of the history of translation from antiquity to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, inquiring about the “implications” that the milestones of translation might have had on the translation of dialect. Since dialect texts are conceived within a political hierarchy of language, a parallelism is established between ‘dialect-standard’ and ‘vernacular language-dominant language’. The emergence of terms and practices relevant for dialect translation (foreignization, literalism, orientalism, etc.) is also traced and analyzed.

### Resumen

La traducción de variedades dialectales es uno de los retos más difíciles y a la vez interesantes que enfrentan los traductores literarios. Si bien los aportes teóricos acerca de la traducción dialectal surgen principalmente a partir de 1960, el presente artículo propone una lectura histórica de la traductología desde la antigüedad hasta la primera mitad del siglo XX indagando acerca de las “implicaciones” que los grandes hitos traductológicos hubieran podido tener para la traducción de dialectos. Ya que los textos dialectales se conciben dentro de una jerarquización política de la lengua, se propone un paralelismo entre ‘dialecto-estándar’ y ‘lengua vernácula-lengua dominante’. Se rastrea y analiza igualmente el surgimiento de términos y movimientos relevantes para la traducción dialectal como extranjerización, literalismo y orientalización, entre otros.

**Keywords:** history, dialect translation, standardization, minority languages.

**Palabras clave:** historia, traducción dialectal, estandarización, lenguas minoritarias.

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## 1. Introduction

Dialect translation can be defined as the attempt to include, in a target text, dialectal traits occurring in a given source text. The translation of texts with dialectal markers, whether incidental or essential, is one of the most difficult problems facing literary translators, considering that the use of a dialect in a text carries a vast number of added meanings, especially understanding variation in Hallidayan terms as “the linguistic expression of fundamental characteristics of a social system” (Mayoral 2000: 112, our translation). However, this type of translation has only been explicitly analyzed in the second half of the twentieth century (cf. Catford 1965, Baker 1992, Hervey and Higgins 1992, Hatim and Mason 1990, Hatim and Mason 1997, Julia Ballbé 1997, Mayoral 1999, Hurtado Albir 2007).

In general, two paths are identified in dealing with a text containing dialectal markers (cf. Rabadán Álvarez 1991, Hatim and Mason 1990, Corpas Pastor 1999, Samaniego 2002). First, the use of an existing dialect that has similar connotations, although most authors dismiss this option because, as described by Sumillera (2008: 33), this can cause coherence problems (Bonaffini 1997), unwanted associations (Hatim and Mason 1990) or a disastrous effect on the plausibility of the target text (Hervey and Higgins 1992). At the other end is the translation into a standard. Although theorists favor this option when the dialect in the text is “incidental” (Hervey and Higgins 1992), this turns out to be the choice advocated and practiced even when the dialect in the text is essential. For example, after studying three Spanish translations of the classic novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, Sumillera (2008: 34) has shown that:

each translation ends up standardizing the Creole by rendering it into the type of Standard Spanish used by its intended readership, thus concealing the existence in the source text of different language varieties.

Moreover, this trend towards standardization is backed by the “law of growing standardization” emanating from Descriptive Translation Studies, which states that “in translation, source-text textemes tend to be converted into target-language (or target-culture) repertoireemes” (Toury 1995: 267).

With this being the backdrop of the current situation in relation to the treatment of dialect in translation (cf. Samaniego Fernández 2002, Bolaños 2004), one should wonder whether it has been a historical constant. Theory and practice of dialect translation, we assume, may have been historically limited, among other things, by the fact that texts containing dialectal markers are usually not deemed worthy of translation. This limitation can be overcome, however, working with the hypothesis that the tendency towards the normalization of dialect-to-standard, a politically hierarchical distinction, may have parallels to situations where political hierarchy affects language, as is the case with the relationship between vernacular and dominant languages.

Recognizing the existence of several proposals for a history of Translation Studies (cf. Kelly 1979, Bassnett 1980, Santoyo 1987, Snell-Hornby 1988, Álvarez Calleja 1991, Mallafré 1991, Steiner 1995, Baker 2001, Hurtado Albir 2007, Munday 2008, Venuti 2012, etc.), this article offers a history of translation from ancient times to the first half of the twentieth century. As mentioned above, explicit documentation on the translation of dialectally marked texts is relatively scarce, but methodologically a critical look at the existing material on the overall history of translation can shed light on the “implications” that theoretical milestones may have had for dialect translation.

The history presented here will be restricted to the major periods of Western civilization, although sometimes including relevant contributions from other cultural areas. As for the historical division, Bassnett's approach will be followed: "in trying to establish certain lines of approach to translation, across a time period that extends from Cicero to the present, it seems best to proceed by following a loosely chronological structure, but without making any attempt to set up clear-cut divisions." (1980: 42).

The following sections will address the translation in Antiquity (third century B.C. to fifth century A.D.), the Middle Ages (fifth century to fifteenth century), Renaissance (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, always with the treatment of dialect translation as background.

## 2. A Dialectal Reading of the History of Translation

### 2.1. Translation in Antiquity (third century B.C. - fifth century A.D.)

Most scholars (including Friedrich 1992, Steiner 1995, Venuti 2012) date the beginning of the debate on translation in the West in the writings of Cicero in 46 B.C. (*De optimo genere oratorum*) and Horace (*Epistola ad Pisones*) in 13 B.C. The main feature of this period is the dichotomy *literal translation* - *free translation*.

According to Kelly (2001), in the third century B.C. Roman soldiers returning from Greece had acquired a taste for Greek theater and translators, including Livius Andronicus, generated free translations of these plays. Kelly (*ibid.*) also states that in the second century B.C. Publius Terentius Afer, better known as Terence, produced Latin texts by translating passages from several Greek texts. However, Robinson (2001) claims that Livius' translations were literal. The fact that Cicero called for free translation as a speaker (*ut orator*) and not word for word as a translator (*ut interpres*) seems to give weight Robinson's assertion, although it is possible that in the first century B.C., with the advent of Greek rhetoric in Rome and translation as one of its branches, translation would see a move from freedom to literalism.

What seems true, nevertheless, is that the enrichment of both the literary system and the language was an integral part of the Roman concept of translation (Bassnett 1980: 44). Translation was perceived as a carrier of novelty, but at the same time translators were advised not to overdo the use of loans. The prominence of meaning over form, which Cicero defended, demonstrates a responsibility of the translators of the time to their readers, most of whom could read Greek (the culturally dominant language), which made translations be read as meta-texts in relation to their source texts:

For Roman translators, the task of transferring a text from language to language could be perceived as an exercise in comparative stylistics, since they were freed from the exigencies of having to "make known" either the form or the content *per se*, and consequently did not need to subordinate themselves to the frame of the original (Bassnett 1980: 45).

The Indian subcontinent presented a very different situation at this time. The dominant language was Sanskrit but, unlike the Vedic religion, since their inception, Buddhism and Jainism used the vernacular as a vehicle of communication and expansion, with the aim of making the teachings of Buddha and Mahavira understood by all. However, the Buddhist canon was written in the first century B.C. and, in addition to using vernacular languages, Buddhist texts began to be written in Sanskrit: "therefore translation became an important part of the transmission of Buddha's teachings" (Krishnamurthy 2001: 466). This 'Sanskritization' also occurred with epics like the Ramayana and the *Puranas* or 'ancient stories', collections of legends and religious materials, which were translated from vernacular languages like Prakrit to classic Sanskrit with the idea of improving their status (Krishnamurthy 2001). This is an explicit example of one of the ways in which the vernacular tends to be displaced by the dominant language.

Returning to the West, St. Jerome continued the debate between literal and free translation. He introduced the term *sense* in his dichotomy: *word for word* / *sense for sense* (Hurtado Albir

2007: 105, Robinson 2001: 125). It was also St. Jerome who made a distinction between secular and sacred translation. The order of the words in the Bible involved mystery and even St. Jerome, with his radical positions in other fields, in his letter to Pammachius in 395, could not escape this perception:

I not only admit, but freely proclaim that in translation [*interpretatione*] from Greek –except in the case of the Sacred Scripture, where the very order of the words is a mystery– I render not word for word, but sense for sense (Jerome 395: 23).

From its beginning, then, the reflection on translation in the West advocated freedom, lack of adherence to the source text and the intention to convey the sense so that it was understood by the target audience. From the point of view of dialect translation, the word-sense dichotomy is highly relevant because dialectal writing is characterized by an attempt to represent language variation through an array of the formal features, which in turn adds to the meaning works. Conceived in this way, the meaning of any work cannot be separated from its form.

A parallelism is also evident, in terms of power relations, between the secular-sacred, vernacular-divine, and dialect-standard. Through history, translation has been seen as a way of enriching “inferior” languages so the translation is almost always in that direction (from Latin to vernacular languages, for example). However, in cases in which a text (like the Ramayana) is deemed worthy of translation, its vernacular-dialectal character disappears, favoring the use of the prestigious language.

## 2.2. *The Middle Ages (fifth century A.D. - fifteenth century A.D.)*

The distinction between sacred and profane translations came to the Middle Ages: “In the religious tradition, respect for the Scripture implies adhering to the words of the original, uncompromisingly defending literal translation” (Hurtado Albir 2007: 106; our translation), while in profane translation a call is made not to adhere slavishly to the source text. However, there are exceptions to this double rule. In this context it is necessary to quote the theologian Wycliffe and his treaty of divine dominion, by which all people had direct responsibility to God and to divine laws and therefore it was essential that the Bible be available in a language understood by all, that is, in the vernacular, a fact that, as noted above, was recognized by Buddha some 1300 years before.

Even before Wycliffe’s Bible (fourteenth century A.D.), the Lindisfarne Gospels (originally c. 715 A.D.) appeared with the source text in Latin and a dialect of Northumbria between lines. The translation was word for word, but there is an attempt to bring the text to the linguistic variety of target readers. Alfred the Great, who reigned from 871 until his death in 899 and translated a large number of Latin texts, shared the view that Wycliffe would later have, when he says: “I think it better, if you agree, that we also translate some of the books that all men should know into the language that we can all understand” (1955: 97). In his translation of *Cura Pastoralis* (‘a manual for pastors’), Alfred the Great says he sometimes translated word for word, sometimes sense for sense. This position implies an emphasis on the function of the product, rather than a predetermined procedure to translate. Discenza (2005) discusses the translations of Alfred the Great suggesting that despite the high prestige of Latin, versions used relatively few loans and calques, looking for a translation that was domesticated, recognized and accepted by the majority of target receptors.

Another important aspect of the linguistic situation of medieval Europe is the proliferation of new vernacular literatures. Without a written tradition, the works of other places were translated, adapted and absorbed by these emerging literatures. In fact, the authors used translation as a way to increase the status of their own vernacular (Bassnett 1980: 52).

The translation from a prestigious language to one with less prestige is known as vertical translation, while translation between two languages of similar prestige is known as horizontal translation. This distinction revived by Folena (1807: 13), had been theorized by Roger Bacon and Dante. The distinction is useful because it shows how translation is linked to two different, but coexisting, systems (Bassnett 1980: 53), but it also suggests that extra-linguistic factors,

such as the various forms of power -religious, political, economic, etc.-, establish a hierarchy of languages: beautiful, expressive, neat, concise, delicate, pure, mystical, are some of the adjectives that throughout history have served to highlight a language, or a variety of language, above the other.

In the Middle Ages, horizontal translation has complex implications, in particular as regards to borrowing ideas and imitation (Bassnett 1980: 53). This latter trend enjoyed high status at the time: the ability of the authors resided in their capacity to rewrite established ideas and issues, often borrowing large excerpts from other authors, something that would be considered plagiarism today. As Bassnett states:

within the opus of a single writer, such as Chaucer (c.1340-1400) there is a range of texts that include acknowledged translations, free adaptations, conscious borrowings, reworkings and close correspondences (Bassnett 1980: 53).

In the Hispanic context, the Middle Ages saw the birth of the Toledo School of Translators, as a meeting point for the Christian, Arabic and Hebrew cultures (Hurtado Albir 2007: 106). Spain “becomes the center of translation of Greek classics into Latin, generally through Arabic” (Alvarez Calleja 1991: 38-39, our translation). Most translations produced in this period were made word for word, even for non-religious texts such as philosophical and scientific treaties, but these translations included notes and comments seeking to lighten the opacity of the target texts (Pym, 2001). However, as stated by Vega (1994: 26, our translation) “with the exception of Maimonides’ letter to Ibn Tibbon, the prologues of Alfred the Great and some other incidental manifestations, all this frenetic translation activity has left little evidence.”

Arabic also influenced translation elsewhere, as in the Persian world, whose language is “the most concrete link between Islamic and pre-Islamic Iranian cultures” (Karimi-Hakkak 2001: 514). Between the seventh and the ninth century A.D., the spread of Islam modified the Persian language, although Arabic also acquired sophistication. In the ninth century, the educated Persian elite took the task of preserving the pre-Islamic texts through their Arabic translation. These texts, in turn, were translated to Modern Persian. Converted Persians wanted to spread the Quran, but being considered the word of God and therefore untranslatable at the time, the spread was given through commentary and verbatim translations for those converts who did not understand Arabic (Karimi-Hakkak 2001: 515).

As noted by Baker (2001b), the translation in the Arab world is different from any other of the era or earlier for three reasons: (1) the amount of source languages, among which are Sanskrit, Greek, Persian, Syriac and Aramaic, (2) the variety of topics translated: treatises on mathematics, philosophy, medicine, chemistry and politics among others, and (3) the official sponsorship of the translation movement, with the establishment of specialized translation centers.

There are, therefore, two dominant trends in the Middle Ages. In the Christian world, translation is viewed as a skill related to ways of reading and interpreting the source text, which is considered the starting material on which translators can work / modify as they please (Bassnett 1980: 53). Thus, the notion of accuracy implies the ability of the translator to interpret the text and not necessarily to subordinate to it. In the Islamic world, there is a tendency towards word for word translation, but also the use of commentary to help the reader.

As for the implications that these stands on translation have for dialect translation, this period would see the emergence of the first attempts to theorize a hierarchization of languages in translation. Wycliffe’s proposal has a political base: stop the common practice of translating for the socially superior and bring the new version to those who have not had access to it, translate seeking changes in linguistic registers, with recipients always in mind. Both in the Islamic as in the Christian World, translation plays a key role in the expansion of knowledge, in general, and the broadening and enhancement of the target literary system in particular.

### 2.3. *The Renaissance (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D.)*

The Renaissance was a revolution in many ways. The world as it was known faltered, for example, with the arrival of Columbus to the Americas in 1492 and Copernicus' heliocentric theory, published in 1543 in *De revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*.

In Europe Gutenberg's Modern Printing Press, used since 1449, represents a breakthrough for the world of translation. Thanks to the press, a new class of readers would emerge and translations would multiply, but also the idea of the original as possession would be born. Interest in national languages led to a rejection of the role that Latin had played so far. Translation is understood as a way to update the literature with new readers in mind and many translators used localisms and idioms pertaining to their time. Translation in the fourteenth century A.D. had been consolidated "in all the Romance languages as a common vehicle of cultural diffusion" (Santoyo 1999: 47, our translation), but this does not mean that translating into Latin had been abandoned.

In Italy, Leonardo Bruni was interested in retaining the original author's style, which he considered an amalgam of the order and rhythm of the words and the elegance of the original (Munday 2008: 23). Bruni proposes that the best way to translate is "to preserve the structure of the original sentence without having the words betray the sense nor splendor, or the beauty of the original words" (Vega 1994: 97, our translation). In opposition to Bruni and most Italian humanists, who in their translations favored the use of classical Latin, Alonso de Cartagena opted for a medieval Latin, sometimes including common words and using "the vernacular, into which he translates Cicero and Seneca, in order to reach as many readers as possible [...] The clarity, simplicity and accuracy of Cartagena contrast with the darkness, purism and artificiality of Bruni" (Río Fernández 2006: 177, our translation).

The notion of *fidelity* at this time is challenged and expanded. These developments lead to *fidelity* not to be related to the author's words, but their meaning in the early part of the seventeenth century. In this context, translation takes on a new role:

it becomes a poetic touchstone: every poet worth his salt, either fills his leisure time translating, or mimics and recreates the classics that are the master lines of the new culture. Translation becomes a literary genre, helping authors acquire personality and style (Vega 1994: 30, our translation).

In France, *La défense et illustration de la langue française* written in 1549 by Du Bellay is a treaty inspired by a desire to enrich the French language through a program of linguistic and stylistic imitation of Greco-Roman genres. Also with it came the image of the translator as a portrait painter who can never print in his portrait the true spirit (in the sense of 'creative force') of the original. However, it is again in the religious realm where translation battles are fought and it is again Bible translators who help in the theoretical advancement of the discipline. Noteworthy is Dolet's contribution of his five rules for the translator, proposed in his *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue in aultre* (1540), which are:

- The translator must understand perfectly the content and intention of the author whom he is translating.
- The translator should have a perfect knowledge of the language from which he is translating (SL) and an equally excellent knowledge of the language into which he is translating (TL).
- The translator should avoid the tendency to translate word to word, for to do so is to destroy the meaning of the original and to ruin the beauty of the expression.
- The translator should employ the forms of speech in common usage.
- Through his choice and order of words the translator should be able to produce to total overall effect with an 'appropriate tone'.

The Catholic Church was concerned about protecting the 'correct' sense of the scriptures and texts related to them. In fact, a 'mistranslation' of one of Plato's dialogues by the same Dolet, which added the phrase "not at all" in a passage about what existed after death, led him to be

tried for blasphemy and sentenced to the stake in 1546. A similar fate suffered Tyndale, an English linguist, ten years before, for his translation of the Bible, a version that would later serve as the basis for the King James I Bible (*King James Version*). In the Hispanic world, Fray Luis de Leon was sent to jail for translating the Bible into the vernacular without a license to do so.

In the German context, Martin Luther translated the *New Testament* (1522) and later *the Old Testament* (1534) to one of the regional dialects which was widely used. Luther's Versions spoke to the people with the voice of the people, being crucial texts for the Reformation. The Church strongly criticized him for suggesting in his versions that individual belief is enough to lead a good life, making the laws of the Catholic Church as an institution seem unnecessary (Munday 2008: 24). From the standpoint of translation-, Luther (1530) proposed the same as St. Jerome had proposed 1100 years before, i.e. moving away from the form and focusing on meaning. However, by placing emphasis in the language of the people and focusing on the reader of the target language and the target text, he transformed the commonly spoken German into a prestigious language.

The Renaissance thus involves several breakthroughs in the world of translation and its implications for dialect translation are clear: first, a recognition of sense as part of the conditions of fidelity, without forgetting that in some texts the form is an essential part of the meaning of the work; second, translators acquire new freedoms employing commonly used idioms, bringing texts to new readers and contexts, and third, perhaps most significant advancement is the recognition that the established power systems (e.g., the Catholic Church or the monarchs at the time) seek to maintain the *status quo* and that one of their main weapons is language. As Lefevere puts it:

Not all features of the original are, it would seem, acceptable to the receiving culture, or rather to those who decide what is, or should be acceptable to that culture: the patrons who commission a translation, publish it, or see to it that it is distributed. The patron is the link between the translator's text and the audience the translator wants to reach. If translators do not stay within the perimeters of the acceptable as defined by the patron (an absolute monarch, but also a publisher's editor), the chances are that their translation will either not reach the audience they want to reach or that it will, at best, reach that audience in a circuitous manner. (Lefevere 1992: 7)

In moving away from these perimeters of acceptability, translators play a key role in the advancement of languages and literatures. Through empowering forms of expression that move away from the norm (at the time translating into Romance languages rather than Latin, for example), translation can bring prestige to dialects.

#### 2.4. *The seventeenth century*

This century "is characterized in Europe by the French taste in translation, namely: *les belles infidèles*" (Hurtado Albir 2007: 110, our translation). This movement claims the right to adapt classical texts by making linguistic and extra-linguistic modifications. The translation of classical texts increases considerably in France, especially between 1625 and 1660 with the rise of a branch of theater based on Aristotelian units in the context of French classicism (Bassnett 1980: 59). However, a call is made again to be faithful to the original during the second half of the century, perhaps as a response to *Les Belles*.

The English context presents a similar picture. According to Amos (1920: 137), this is the golden age of translation in England, marking an important milestone in the theory of translation. In the first half of the century, after a brief period of literalism, such as that by English playwright Benjamin 'Ben' Jonson (1572-1637), Sir John Denham (1656) proposes a way to translate that covers the formal tissue and the 'spirit' of the text, while discouraging literal translation for poetic works: "Poetry is of so subtle a Spirit, that in pouring out one Language into another, it will Evaporate, and if a new Spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *Caput Mortuum*" (*apud* Bassnett 1980: 59). According to

Denham, the original author and the translator are equals, but in differing social situation and time.

Denham sees translation as the need to extract what he considers essential in the work and reproduce it or, more precisely, recreate it. Recreation, thus understood, establishes the preferred translation approach at the time. A radical example is provided by the Preface to *Pindarique Odes*, in which the translator says he has taken, left out and added what suited the purpose of making the reader understand what the author had said, but most importantly, the way he had said it (Cowley 1656). This translator names this method *imitation*. This term would be used again by Dryden (1680: 38) in the three ways of translating he proposed:

- *Metaphrase* - “turning an authour word by word, and Line by Line”.
- *Paraphrase* “translation with Latitude, where the Authour is kept in view by the Translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly follow’d as his sense, and that too is admitted to be amplyfied, but not alter’d”
- *Imitation* “where the Translator (if now he has not lost that Name) assumes the liberty not only to vary from the words and sence, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion: and taking only some general hints from the Original, to run division on the ground-work, as he pleases”.

Dryden would strongly criticize both *metaphrase* and *imitation*. The first due to its servitude: “But since every Language is so full of its own proprieties, that what is Beautiful in one, is often Barbarous, nay sometimes Nonsense in another, it would be unreasonable to limit a Translator to the narrow compass of his Authours words” (Dryden 1680: 41). About *imitation* he states: “Imitation of an Authour is the most advantageous way for a Translator to shew himself, but the greatest wrong that can be done to the Memory and Reputation of the dead” (1680: 40). Dryden’s ideal was *paraphrase*, being the more balanced approach, although he admits skipping sometimes the very same rules he proposed (1680: 42). Dryden, just as Pope would do, suggests using the language of their time to bring the classics to new a new readership. He also makes use of the image of the painter as a metaphor for translator, whose painting should resemble the original as closely as possible. This would be a recurring image throughout the eighteenth century, as will be discussed in the following section.

But before, this section will conclude with some of the observable impact that this period would have to help advance translation theory and its relation to dialectal translation. For example, increased dialogue between translators promoted the development of terminology specific to the field of translation. Concepts like *metaphrase*, *paraphrase* and *imitation* continue to be discussed, albeit with variations in nomenclature, well into the twentieth century. Similarly, the image of the translator as a painter-reproducer, subdued to both the original language and culture, or as creator and adapter of texts to their time, space and culture, resulted in proposals that would lead to the distinction between foreignizing or domesticating translation.

The duality of these two ways of translating is often present in dialectally marked texts. As mentioned, these texts are characterized by the modification of standard orthotypographical conventions in order to represent traits associated with a dialect. In translating these texts, therefore, one should ideally aim at recovering their unconventional modes of expression, perhaps by adding foreignizing traits that would help limit the fluency of the text. Paradoxically, this foreignizing effect could be achieved by using radical domestication, i.e. using unconventional modifications to the standard written target language. These modifications, however, would make the text look dialectal, and thus somehow close to the target reader. Not being accustomed to reading dialectal texts, the reader will find the translation not to be too fluent.

Tensions between the source text and target audience are at the core of dialect translation. Translators and translation theorists have tried to position themselves on either side of the dichotomy. The notion of “imitation” is equally relevant here: although not recommended, it is deemed as a possible way to translate, thus widening the scope of the discipline.



## 2.5. The eighteenth century

The eighteenth century would see the birth of the first systematic study of translation in English with Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation*. In his essay, the Scottish theorist "flees the opposition debate in terms of literal / free and introduces the concept of the recipient in the consideration of translation" (Hurtado Albir 2007: 114, our translation), proposing three general rules of translation that can be summarized as:

- A Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
- The style and manner of writing in a Translation should be of the same character with that of the Original.
- A Translation should have all the ease of original composition.

These standards are organized hierarchically, the first one being the most important. Tytler criticizes Dryden's *paraphrase* for producing translations that are too free, while agreeing that the translator must clarify obscure passages of the source text. Moreover, according to Bassnett (1980: 61), he emphasizes the moral duty of the translator to their contemporary reader, the individual's right to being approached in the language of his time, which is a substantial element of translation in the eighteenth century being linked to changes in the concept of "originality".

As mentioned above, the image of the translator as painter was a constant during this century as well, although with a change in perception. Tytler argues that the translator as a painter cannot use the same colors as the source text, but they do need to provide their new painting with the same force and effect as the source (Bassnett 1980: 63).

Women translators in this period began to receive admiration and explicitly influence the development of the discipline. For example, Charlotte Brooke produced the first anthology of translations of Gaelic poetry in Ireland in 1789, reviving Celtic literature, which in turn would rise interest in orientalizing and medievalizing in the nineteenth century (Ellis and Oakley-Brown 2001: 341) and in exoticism in general (Hurtado Albir 2007: 115).

Another fundamental aspect of translation in this century is that in England, France, Spain and Germany the interest in Latin classics began to wane, giving way to translation among the languages of these countries. In France, for example, mainly English and German works were translated (Salama-Carr 2001: 412).

However, in the last years of the eighteenth century in France there was a conscious effort by the government to eliminate dialects.

Between 1790 and 1792 a questionnaire was sent by l'Abbé Grégoire to lawyers, clergymen, and politicians in the French provinces under the pretext of documenting and cataloguing the linguistic and ethnographic uses of the thirty local "patois" spoken in France at the time. In fact, through this survey, the Jacobins established a blueprint for the subsequent systematic eradication of these patois (Kramsch 1998: 72-73).

There are several theories about the government's motives for eradication. One proposes that the French Revolution would be accompanied by a linguistic nationalism seeking cultural unity. A second theory states the dominant bourgeois culture typical of Paris wanted to be expanded to peasant circles. According to a recent theory, the eradication of dialects may be due to a government effort to take away the cultural monopoly of the Catholic Church, which at the time reached people by preaching in local varieties (Kramsch 1998).

Among those mentioned by Tytler, his call to recover (imitate) the style and shape of the source text in the target text is perhaps the most relevant from the standpoint of dialect translation. However, Tytler establishes a limitation: "this imitation [of style] must always be regulated by the nature or genius of the languages of the original and the translation" (1791: 96). The author offers examples such as the characteristic brevity of Latin and French when compared to English or Latin's ability to reverse the order of words and use elliptical constructions. He also warns that while understanding the essence of a text is the first requirement to translate, the work of recovering the shape and style is much more complicated.

Tyler argued for keeping the register in which the source text is presented. At the time, most texts deserving translation had no dialectal features and style referred to whether the text was severe, high, relaxed, vivid, ornate or simple (Tyler 1791: 64). For Tyler, one of the faults of translators was that:

in the hands of some translators, who have discernment to perceive the general character of their author's style, but want this correctness of taste, the grave style of the original becomes heavy and formal in the translation; the elevated swells into bombast, the lively froths up into the petulant, and the simple and naïf degenerates into the childish and insipid (Tyler 1791: 75).

Tyler recognizes the importance of register and criticizes a number of Echard's translations for modifying it: in the first scene of *Amphitryo of Plautus* the translator did not see the difference between the familiar and the vulgar, translating in "the true dialect of the street" (1791: 77), in the first scene of *Andria* Echard changed the simple style of the source text by a "vulgar-petulant style". About Echard he states:

In the use of idiomatic phrases, a translator frequently forgets both the country of his original author, and the age in which he wrote; and while he makes a Greek or a Roman speak French or English, he unwittingly puts into his mouth allusions to the manners of modern France or England (Tyler 1791: 140).

For Tyler, the translation of idiomatic expressions in the source text represents one of the most difficult obstacles facing the translator. He argues that a Latin idiom can have a modern equivalent, but that the translator might rarely make their author speak in the vernacular of the time of the translation. However, when the beauty of the phrase lies precisely in the idiomatic factor, it is equally undesirable to translate it into plain language (1791: 148). To demonstrate this, Tyler studies two translations of *Don Quixote*, that of Motteux and that of Smollett, praising the first one for its ability to recover its idiomatic expressions without falling into plainness. Register, from this standpoint, becomes a measure of translation quality.

## 2.6. The nineteenth century

The nineteenth century saw an industrial and commercial expansion that would make the exchanges between languages through translation increase and diversify.

In the field of literary translation there are two conflicting trends. One is the romantic notion of the poet as an almost mystical creator. Such idea would also apply to the translator's work, providing the translator with a freedom not enjoyed before (freedom not with respect to the source text, but rather to their approach to the recipients of the target text). This perspective led to new translations of the classics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The vision of the translator as creator proclaimed translation as a category of thought and the job of the translator was to enrich the language and literature of their target audience (Bassnett 1980: 65).

Under this romantic conception, ancient literatures were left aside in favor of contemporary and exotic literatures that had been previously unexplored.

In Latin America, the nineteenth century comes hand in hand with the ideas of independence. Writers in the region in search of a new identity began looking at North America and non-Spanish Europe for new writing models. Newspapers, publishing houses and universities flourished. Instruction would have an important role in the development of the translation. In Chile, for example, with the creation of the University of Chile in 1842, texts, generally coming from France, were required to be translated, and it was "quite common that texts destined for pedagogical use would be adapted to the Chilean context rather than translated literally" (Bastin 2001: 510). In Cuba, José María Heredia y Heredia, who translated works by Voltaire, Sir Walter Scott, Jean François Ducis and Tyler, among others, was always looking to improve "the original text with his own creativity" (*ibid.*). Despite these examples, Bastin notes that "translations during the period reflect more the genius of the original writer than the

creativity of the translator; in other words they tended to adhere closely to the source text” (2001: 509), which brings us to the second tendency of the period.

The second trend presented a mechanical view of translation, claiming that the role of the target text was to make the original author known to the target audience. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this vision emphasized technical accuracy in translation, which would produce almost pedantic versions. The underlying problem was the conception of meaning, which at the time was considered to be hidden between the lines. With this view, translators had two possible ways out: either to stick closely to the letter of the source text by means of a literal translation or to use an artificial language so that the reader could come close to the “special feelings” that the source text produced (Bassnett 1980: 66).

Romanticism and post-Romanticism in Europe are characterized by a call to literalism, which at this time has a double meaning: “a *linguistic literalism* based on the principle of archaization, and a *historical literalism, of historical reconstruction*, which advocates for the recovering of the local color, the exoticism of the foreign” (Hurtado Albir 2007: 115, our translation). An example of this tendency would be Schleiermacher's proposal to create a sub-language to be used exclusively for literary translation. In Latin America, Andrés Bello, perhaps the most renowned translator of the time states: “The translator of a work of imagination, if he aspires to the praise of true loyalty, is required to represent us, as closely as he can, all that characterizes the country, and the world, and the genius of his author” (1882: 105, our translation).

At first, translations sought to enrich the target culture by texts whose authors were considered geniuses. However, the translations produced under the premises of literalism could only be enjoyed by a minority of educated people (who had to know the source language), which led translation to become an area of limited interest and to its devaluation by the end of the century. Theoretical reflection in the second half of this century also decays: the interest in the impact of translation in the target culture led to reduced attention to the translation process itself.

From the point of view of dialect translation, proposing a new language for literary translation suggests the view of translated literature as a special entity in the target culture polysystem.

Similarly, the role of translation for the enrichment of the literature of the target culture is again recognized. If a source literature has accepted the use of dialectal resources, then producing translations in the target language that use such resources would enrich the receiving culture's polysystem. Such would be the case of translating works written in Caribbean English, which has accepted a large number of non-standard typographical features, into a variant of Spanish Caribbean, changing standard spelling to represent the aspirations or elisions of certain phonemes.

Furthermore, the dichotomy between translations focused on the author and those that focus on the reader reopens the debate between foreignizing and domesticating translation. Although Schleiermacher recommended against the combination of the two proposals, favoring the proximity to the author, producing translations which are too foreignizing without considering their effect in the mass of readers can result in the decline of interest in translated texts altogether.

## 2.7. *The first half of the twentieth century*

The first half of the twentieth century saw a revival of the theoretical discussion about translation and of experiments seeking formal innovation.

In the first three decades of the century, the philosophical aspects surrounding the translation task gained relevance. In the twenties, Benjamin presents *The Task of the Translator* a view of translation as a mode of expression that refers to the original, which in turn contains the law governing any translation: translatability. Translatability, for Benjamin, is an essential element of certain works and those who have it are those that deserve to be translated.

For this philosopher, the task of the translator is “to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in

his recreation of that work” (Benjamin 1923: 82). This ‘pure language’ is a philosophical concept that refers to the intention underlying each language as a whole, but that is only obtainable through all intentions in all languages.

For Benjamin, this is achieved “by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the element of the translator” (1923: 81). While advances in translation studies have neglected the word as the basic unit of translation to concentrate on the (con)text, this call to literalism has several implications for dialect translation, the most important being the ability of translation to bring the foreign to a new context, enriching the literary polysystem of the target language. In fact, Benjamin (1923: 82) cites Pannwitz, who states:

Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works. [...] The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.

This ‘error’ of translators is one of the major causes for the tendency to minimize dialect in translated literary works. Respect for the established literary polysystem often limits the expressive power of translators.

A similar approach to Benjamin’s and Pannwitz’s can be found in Ortega y Gasset, a decade later, when he says:

It is clear that a country's reading public do not appreciate a translation in style of their own language. For this, they have more than enough native authors. What is appreciated is the inverse: carrying the possibilities of their language to the extreme of the intelligible so that the ways of speaking appropriate to the translated author seems to cross into theirs (Ortega y Gasset 1937: 452, translated by Elizabeth Gamble Miller).

Ezra Pound also contributed to the discourse on translation of the time, distinguishing two forms of autonomy in translation. A translated text can be interpretative or it may correspond to original writing, following the standards of the literature of the target language. Pound’s vision summarizes the two trends of the beginning of the century: a formalist view interested in the art and innovative translation strategies (archaic translations, for example) –a foreignizing translation strategy– and a functionalist perspective, where the social work of translation focused on maintaining the cultural unity of the West (Venuti 2004: 73) –a domesticating translation strategy.

Pound’s modernist practice consisted of a mix of different translation strategies, especially domestication which paradoxically, by including the use of a wide spectrum of dialects and forms of discourse, resulted in foreignizing translations (cf. Venuti 2001).

In general, this period is characterized by an emphasis on the hermeneutic character of translation, seeing it “from a philosophical conception of language and not from its systemic or aesthetic value” (Vega 1994: 48, our translation). Theoretical reflection includes the concept of ‘translatability’ and ‘fidelity’. The main problem, according to Hurtado Albir (2007: 121, our translation), is the lack of definition of these concepts, “fidelity being usually identified with literalness [...] while free translation covers a vast range from the mere adequacy to the target language to spatial, temporal and even informative adaptation.” Another problem is the emphasis on prescription. Lastly, the rise of mass communications would definitively separate the translator from their readers, expanding the social classes and groups that would have access to their version: the reader, that in the Victorian era was generally well defined, becomes less tangible.

Although at this time the major milestones on translation do not reflect specifically on the translation of dialectally marked texts and few side articles on the subject are produced –for example an article by Schlauch (1939) on the (lack of) Spanish translation of slang in Hollywood films. Philosophical reflection on translation opens the possibilities of this type of

translation by suggesting that the reader can be brought closer to the target culture, providing the translator with freedom to experiment formally with the work so far as permitted by intelligibility. In fact, the call for experimentation made by early twentieth-century modernism entailed new translation strategies that would restrict the predominance of the discourse of transparency and fluidity as translation requirements (Venuti 1995: 187). However, the momentum of the beginning of the century had little real impact, either theoretical or empirical, and even today transparency and fluency are still the most commonly used parameters to measure a 'good' translation (cf. Venuti 1995: 1-8, 187).

### 3. Conclusions

Tracking historical approaches to translation from ancient times to the first half of the twentieth century from the perspective of dialectal translation allows us to suggest that while there are no direct references to the translation from and to dialects in cultural and historical moments such as the Renaissance, Romanticism and post-Romanticism, there is evidence of the concern of translators (Luther, for example) to account for translation into less favored languages and the effects that such concern had in the life of the languages that at the time were considered minority languages or lacking prestige (vernacular German). The exaltation of the vernacular in the target texts in various historical periods also shows the important role played by translators in shaping the target polysystem. An example of this is presented by the translations of Wycliffe and Alfred the Great in the Middle Ages or Alonso de Cartagena during the Renaissance. Similarly, exoticism, orientalization and medievalization in the eighteenth century and literalism a century later, among others, show tensions between the foreign and the local, between foreignizing and domesticating, tensions that are at the heart of the dialect translation.

Some approaches to translation have touched pedantry (cf. late nineteenth century, for example), so that only the elite could access certain texts, which led to a detriment in the value of translation. At other times intelligibility of the work being translated has been taken to the limit (e.g. Bruni's translation in the Middle Ages or the position of Ortega y Gasset in the early twentieth century), while not excluding the masses directly, exercising pressure on acceptability.

Finally, the historical interpretation proposed here aims to bring up two points: first, the evidence of the lack of explicit theoretical reflection before the second half of the twentieth century on the translation of dialects, and second, the fact that the historical reflections on translation in general do have implications for dialect translation, especially regarding the relationship between foreignization and dialect translation and the parallels that have been outlined between vernacular languages-dominant languages and standard languages-dialects.

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